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ABSTRACT

The communication that occurs in a language classroom is real communication, because the interactions deal with ordinary, everyday matters. The substance of classroom management and the related exchanges between students and teacher, such as roll call and group exercises, provide many opportunities for language learning. Teachers can require students to learn classroom phrases and use them frequently. Teachers should use phrases repeatedly and use more of the target language than the students are able to use, monitor student language use and learn from it, use the language produced by the students, and, from the first class, convince students that foreign language use is essential. The students' native language can be used not only as a last resort, but also, when necessary, for clarity in discussing goals, when checking comprehension, to aid student memory, for test and other instructions, for explanation when necessary, for discussion of culture, especially at lower levels, and for teaching grammar. (MSE)

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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT THROUGH THE TARGET LANGUAGE

Coming into teaching at a time when the Direct Method was still in vogue, for a good many years I felt guilty if my classes were not conducted in the target language throughout. On the other hand, I had the feeling that a mixture of mother tongue and target language was more appropriate. The idea of using/not using the target language all the time is a matter of considerable importance because nowadays many people will tell you that "communicative methods" imply teaching through the target language. In doing so they start from a false premise. There is no such thing as the "communicative method"; there is a communicative approach. This can be applied to many methods. However, the best book to go with this approach is not a book at all but a loose-leaf file for both teacher and pupil, into which goes anything and everything, from authentic texts, including the pupil's own, to specially constructed texts and exercises.

Schools are looking for overhead projectors, video recorders, cassette recorders and so on, all in a frantic search for the "communicative method". Although we seem to be heading in the right direction, I often wonder if we are. 1986 is the year of the new Leaving Certificate oral examinations. How good a test can an oral exam be? Surely the best way to certify that the candidate can communicate orally about ordinary everyday things in ordinary everyday foreign language is for the teacher to do so? I feel that in the euphoria engendered by the new exams we may miss the wood for the trees. The best place to start communicating is in the classroom, about what goes on in the classroom and school, while something is going on in the classroom. After all, pupils spend an enormous amount of time in school during the school day. This is what classroom management is all about.

Jane Willis has the following to say about teaching English through English in her book of the same name:

> Teaching English through English means speaking and using English as often as you possibly can, for example, when organizing teaching activities or chatting to your students socially. In other words it means establishing English as the main language of communication between your students and yourself; your students must know that it does not matter if they make mistakes when they are talking, or if they fail to understand every word that you say. They must recognise that if they want to be able to use their English at the end of their course they must practise it during their course.
> (p.xiii)

What do teachers do? On the subject of teachers in general,

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Sinclair and Brazil (pp.22ff.) say that we tell pupils things, get pupils to do things by ordering, controlling and instructing, organizing the teaching/learning process. We get pupils to say things by questioning and probing, stimulating various kinds of talk, involving pupils and getting them to commit themselves. We also evaluate what pupils do. Sinclair and Brazil go on to outline three aspects of teaching: content, organization and discipline, and it is organization and discipline which concern us here. In the area of organization "There is the school timetable .... There are the activities in a lesson, experiments, examinations ... preparation, homework ... and all the other things that students have to do." In the area of dscipline "There are roll-calls and registers ...."

When I think of the real communication which takes place in my class during any forty-minute period - and here I do not mean communication induced by me by means of a text or a role-play and so on, then I think of examples like the following.

Roll-call (beginners' class, end of term 2)

	Teacher	Pupils
1.	John Smith	Hier!
2a.	Dermot Martin	Nicht hier!
	Wo ist er?	[silence]
	Nicht in der Schule?	[chorus:] Ich weiss nicht
	Wer hat ihn in der letzten Stunde gesehen?	Maybe he's with Mr Jones
	Auf Deutsch, bitte!	Er ist mit Mr Jones, I think
3.	OK! Weiter!	
	Aine Ryan	Hier!
	Ich gratuliere. Ich habe gehört, du hast einen Preis gewonnen. Was hast du gemacht?	Eh, eh ...
	Sag es ruhig auf Englisch	A project on the butterflies of the Aran Islands
	Wie interessant! Hast du es mit?	

The whole class gets involved in this sort of exchange, especially if other people also did projects.

2b. Enter Dermot Martin 10 minutes later.

Na, endlich! Wo bist du geblieben?	Miss, I was in sick-bay
Hast du einen Zettel? A note?	Here
Danke schön! Feeling better?	Yes, thanks
Setz dich!	

4.

	Miss, darf ich zum Musik-unterricht?
Ja. Von wann bis wann?	Von 10.30 Uhr bis 11 Uhr
Gut. Bring deine Mappe mit!	
Bis morgen!	'Wiedersehen!

Think of all the language learning involved here. Often when referring to a new grammar item one need only refer to the store of language built up during the course of such exchanges. It is under the heading of Classroom Phrases that a lot of the necessary jargon is to be found in recent publications.

Let us go on to the body of the work in the classroom and let me give you an example of group work with a class of eighteen in their third year of German. The class has been working on a package from Inter Nationes entitled "Das München-Spiel" in which they have seen slides of Munich, heard a commentary on places of importance, and listened to Münchener talking about the place they work in. The class had to extract specific information from the tapes with the help of a grid. The object of the exercise is the "München-Spiel", a board game of which I have only one copy. Therefore, the pupils must work in three groups, with one group playing the board game while the other two groups prepare an itinerary of Munich. Activities are rotated.

Management involved:

a. Telling the class what is to be done. Telling the whole class in German and, if requested, in the mother tongue, but only what has not been understood. Here one needs a good set of teacher "sensors"!

b. Getting pupils to rearrange the room. They should be accustomed to group work at this stage.

c. Giving the board game to one group. This group tries to decipher the rules in German. They inevitably use a mixture of German and English here. Most of the German needed to play the game has already been learnt or is on the board itself.

d. Explaining the work on the itinerary, distributing brochures. Use German unless requested for explanation. Group leader elected in German. Brochures studied using English and German, also discussion. The end-product should be hung on the class bulletin board as it is a truly authentic text.

Now to get to the point of conducting classes in the target language, not in any order of priority:

1. Pupils should be made to learn off classroom phrases and these phrases should be used frequently. Pupils could build up a collection of these in a folder.

2. Constant use of the same phrases, plus English or gesture at first if necessary.

3. Always use more of the target language than they can use.

4. Harness things learnt in other situations.

5. Talking and doing.

6. Foreign language summaries of things they tell you in the mother tongue, for example, for use on the bulletin board.

7. Do not be afraid to use the mother tongue, and not necessarily as a last resort.

8. Monitor and diagnose from what you hear rather than correcting pupil errors all the time.

9. Prowl around when they are supposed to be working in the foreign language and make sure the pupils realize what you are up to. This is very important in the early stages.

10. Use the language the pupils produce.

11. Plan with the pupils from the first lesson. Convince them that foreign language use in class is essential.

When is English (i.e. mother tongue) used?

i. When discussing goals, for clarity.

ii. When checking comprehension.

iii. As an aid to learning off, to aid memory.

iv. Testing, e.g. instructions.

v. Explaining, when necessary.

vi. Talking about culture, particularly in the junior stages.

vii. Teaching grammar.

viii. Instructions, e.g. for some levels of role-play.

ix. Pupil-to-pupil asides!

My position is the same as Michael Buckby's, that is, "... to use English as little as possible, but to accept that a class of young people, all of whom speak English, will be helped more efficiently to acquire another language if they and the teacher learn when it is most efficient to use English" (1985, p.53). Michael Buckby also maintains that "the bain linguistique has been responsible for many linguistic murders by drowning" (ibid.,

p.51). What I would advocate is a douche linguistique.

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